

EDUCATION.

TEACHERS' EXAMINATIONS.

A significant comment upon the capacities of many teachers comes from Elizabeth, N. J., where applicants for positions in the public schools have just been examined. A dozen would-be teachers presented themselves at one time. The Committee proceeded to examine them all. There were several positions vacant, and it was hoped that out of the dozen a sufficient number would "pass" to fill the positions. The examination was one evidently practical, as only primary grade certificates were needed in only four or five elementary studies. The result was anything but satisfactory. Twenty-five words were given out to be spelled. They were all of them practical and in common use every day. One applicant spelled two correctly out of the 25, another spelled three, one or two only spelled nearly all, but none spelled every one. "Manager," "Numerous," "Parallel," "Nitch," "Believe," "Croch," "Mischievous," "Croque," "Scholarship"—these are some of the specimen words as copied from the examination papers themselves. The Committee on Teachers insist that a candidate must receive at least 70 per cent—only we reached this standard in spelling. Yet the ones who were most deficient thought they could get along if the committee would "only give them a chance." In geography the examination showed up several candidates in a light that would have been comical under different circumstances. The questions and answers were both written. Here is a specimen:

Question—"Name several of the principal seaports towns of the United States?"

Answer—"New-York, Massachusetts, Maine and Florida."

Question—"How would you go from Philadelphia to Vienna by water?"

Answer—"Delaware River, Delaware Bay, Atlantic Ocean, Gulf of Mexico, Pacific Ocean."

These are actual written, bona-fide answers of applicants for positions as teachers. In all the other studies in which the candidates were examined there was shown that same lack of competency, and out of the twelve who applied, only a very small proportion received the requisite 70 per cent in all the studies.

TOO MUCH MEMORY WORK.

A Mobile newspaper says that the prime evil of the prevailing method of teaching consists in the careful cultivation of the memory to the neglect of the thinking powers. Commencing with the teachers, even of the highest grade, down to the youngest child in the school, there is an almost slavish adherence to the mere language of the text books. Teachers do not trouble themselves to study over the lessons, to comprehend thoroughly their full significance, but on the contrary only too frequently go into the class-room and have to depend upon the book in order to hear the lesson. In theory this is not allowed, but in practice it is pretty general. Such being the case, the teacher, having no higher sense of responsibility than the necessity of going through a certain form in order to secure the quarter's salary, is very well content to find the scholar perfect in the mere language of technicalities of the lesson. The scholar, finding nothing further required, is only too glad to perform the comparatively easy task of committing so many lines or paragraphs to memory, leaving its comprehension severely alone, or to follow blindly rules without any pains to discover their scope and value. As a consequence most school children have their minds choked with dates, facts, and the mere language of laws and principles of which they have no understanding whatever, and aside from the routine of the text books know absolutely nothing, and have not made their own, by mental digestion, any appreciable portion of the knowledge they have spent so many hours in attaining."

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